

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1444

As Reported By House Committee On:
Trade & Economic Development

Title: An act relating to the advanced technology research initiative.

Brief Description: Adopting the advanced technology research initiative.

Sponsors: Representatives Van Luven, Chopp, Morris, Hankins, Radcliff, Carlson, H. Sommers, Dyer, Blalock, Dickerson, O'Brien, Keiser, Butler, Wood, Scott, Cole, Mason, Dunn, D. Schmidt, Cooper, Gombosky, Ogden and Murray.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Trade & Economic Development: 2/6/97, 2/17/97 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Van Luven, Chairman; Dunn, Vice Chairman; Sheldon, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ballasiotes; McDonald; Morris and Alexander.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Veloria, Ranking Minority Member; and Mason.

Staff: Kenny Pittman (786-7392).

Background: Advanced technology and its associated research is an important component of the state's economic development strategy that is designed to develop high-paying, high-skilled jobs for the future. The state's major research universities (University of Washington and Washington State University) are actively involved in the development of technology that has the potential of commercial application. In recent years the competition among states for advanced technology research initiatives and federal research funds has intensified. New federal research grant opportunities are increasingly requiring matching funds from state and private sources.

Summary of Bill: The Advanced Technology Research Initiative is created to enhance the environment for advanced technology and to stimulate greater economic vitality in Washington.

The University of Washington and Washington State University are each directed to recruit new advanced technology initiatives and to provide matching dollars for new federal grant opportunities. The advanced technology research initiative must be headed by a senior, full professor that: (a) has engaged in internationally known advanced technology research; (b) has the ability to recruit at least two junior faculty members as assistants; (c) is well established at an existing research entity; (d) places a high priority and emphasis on the development of intellectual property of commercial significance; (e) has strong, established links to private industry; (f) has proven ability to secure public and private sector grant funds; and (g) has the potential to enhance the development of jobs.

The state funds must be targeted toward enhancing the development of existing or emerging Washington advanced technology industries that include aerospace, agriculture, software, pharmaceuticals, biomedical devices, biotechnology, telecommunications, and veterinary medicine. Each university is responsible for providing facilities, infrastructure, and other support necessary to their advanced technology research initiatives. Each university is encouraged to seek private sector contributions and federal grant funding to help support their advanced technology research initiatives. State funds must be used to help secure new grants and contracts that support the development of specific Washington industries, and cannot be used to replace lost federal funds for existing grants or contracts.

The University of Washington and Washington State University must each establish an Advanced Technology Advisory Committee to advise the universities on the activities of the advanced technology research initiatives. A majority of the members must be from private industry.

Advanced technology is defined as advanced computing, advanced materials, biotechnology, electronic device technology, and environmental technology.

Appropriation: \$9 million from the general fund (\$6 million to the University of Washington and \$3 million to Washington State University).

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: We have an opportunity to do something for the future of this state. The key to research is getting the matching funds to attract available federal and private funds for research. This bill will allow research universities the opportunity to expand research in the advanced technology area. The research universities do not develop the product, but work with businesses that develop the final product. The results of the university research is exported throughout the world and helps both the urban and rural areas of the state.

Testimony Against: This is nothing more than corporate welfare. The public should not bear the cost and risk, while the private sector gets the rewards of public efforts. The universities should focus on education and not just business-related activities.

Testified: Representative Van Luven, prime sponsor (pro); Larry Ganders, Washington State University (pro); Enid Layes, University of Washington (pro); Ray Shindler, Washington Association of Wheat Growers & Washington Wheat Commission (pro); and Todd Fedorenko, Institute for Washington Future (con).